DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 340 905 CE 060 092

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TITLE Forging Links that Bind: Quality Partnerships between Educators and Industry.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 19p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS At Risk Persons; *Educational Cooperation; Educational Quality; High Schools; Organizational Effectiveness; Postsecondary Education; Productivity; *School Business Relationship; *School Effectiveness; Technological Advancement
IDENTIFIERS *Partnerships in Education

ABSTRACT

Productive partnerships between educators and business result in better educated students and a more productive work force. Although the training industry has increased over the last decade, funding for public schools continues to diminish. Partnerships benefit both education and industry. The current emphases upon quality in business and institutional effectiveness in education are the bases for common ground. Partnerships should be investigated at the high school level in order to rescue at-risk students. Employers pursue activities such as Junior Achievement, tutoring, mentorships, and lectures to select classes in order to strengthen cooperation. Volunteerism is an important factor in forming partnerships. Successful partnerships are like successful marriages: if proper care and nurturing are invested in these relationships, the payoff is long and rewarding and each partner grows and flourishes. (11 references) (NLA)

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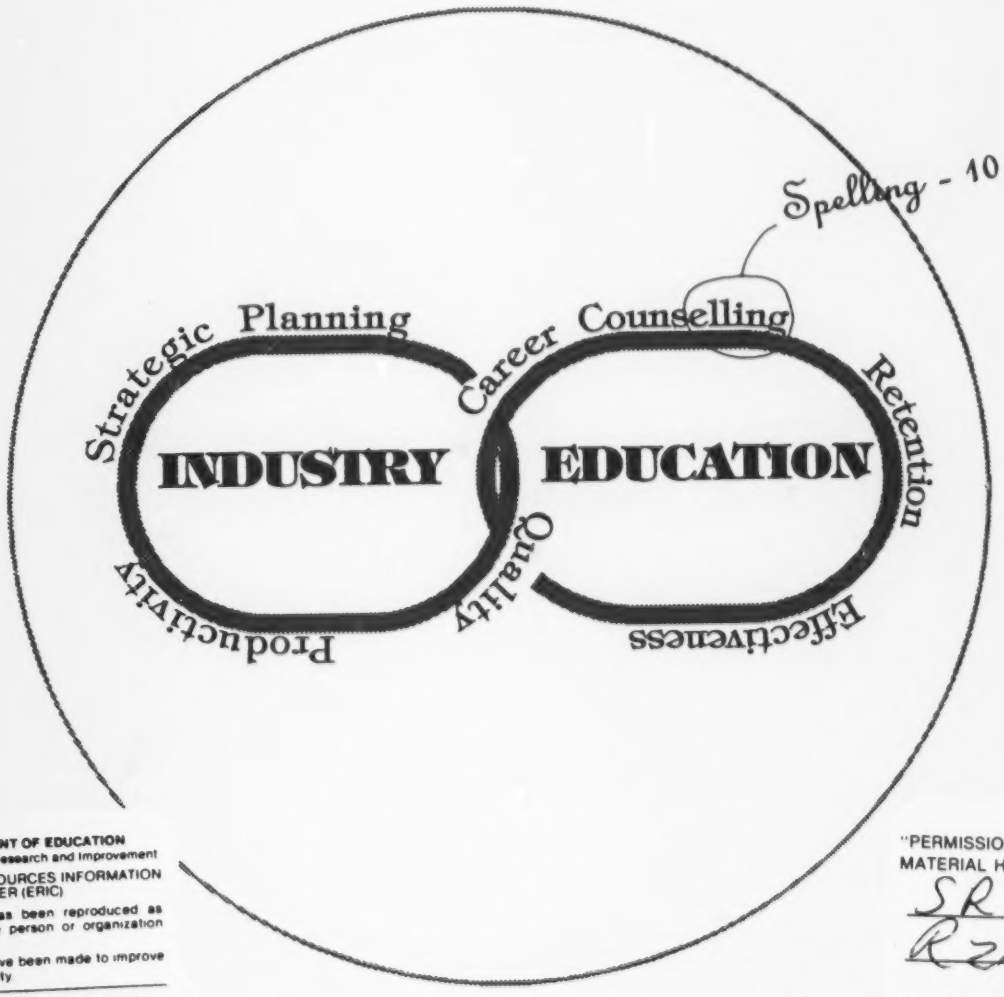
Forging Links That Bind:

Quality Partnerships between Educators and Industry



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Abstract

The eighties was a decade of changes in attitudes in America. Authors such as Rosabeth Kanter and Tom Peters published best-selling books about the necessity for fresh ideas in American industry. At the end of the decade, the Hudson Institute published a provocative report on the status of the changes in the American work force. The term and buzz- word "Workforce 2000" became more than a catchy phrase. Industry and Education became alarmed about the current status of their most important resource - people. The prognosticators painted a grim picture for the future in each arena.

Although some partnerships sprang up throughout this period, finger-pointing and criticism was a more common phenomenon, as Educators looked at Corporate America and Corporate America looked at Education. These two sides appeared to lose sight of the fact that they were dealing with the same target population and that **cooperative** remedies were in order.

It is our desire to provoke thought, to stimulate discussion, to increase dialogue between the two domains, and if necessary, to create constructive anger on both sides of the fence. Productive linkages between industry and education can only lead to a "Win-Win" result.

In manufacturing no chain is stronger than its weakest link. Joint efforts between Educators and Business should apply the basic tenet of quality manufacturing - tool and fine tune the weak links which have separated us. The result can only be better-educated students and a more productive work force.

CUTTING THROUGH THE JARGON

Industry	Education
Management By Objective / Strategic Planning	Performance-Based Education
Self-Directed Work Teams	Site-Based Management
Total Quality Management	Institutional Effectiveness
Productivity Through Reduced Waste	Retention

The training industry in America has undergone a metamorphosis in visibility and viability over the last decade. More than $44-billion per year was budgeted for training in large corporations in 1989. This was at least a twelve percent (12%) increase over the previous year.

Conversely, American education continued to lose ground in funding for public schools, colleges and universities. In our home state of Texas, funding for education will be a major topic of discussion during a special legislative session which is scheduled for July. Because of a lawsuit which demands that property-tax- poor school districts receive equal funding to that of richer school districts, hard questions will have to be answered. Higher education may well be the "Peter" which the State robs to pay "Paul".

Much of the training budget for corporate America is invested for training at the managerial level and above. When the line workers are trained in new techniques, the training is usually vendor-driven. Criticism has been leveled at the education which many of these executives have received in the business schools of the country. With new, flatter and leaner organizations, the *Organization Man* has given way to the *Participative Manager*. Hierarchical organization charts with many chiefs now show horizontal lines which link a series of empowered employees.

ADVANTAGES OF PARTNERSHIPS

Benefits for the College/University

- Reduced Dependence on State and Federal Funding
- Relevant Curriculum is Guaranteed because of Contact with the "Real World"
- Changes are Promoted through Proactive rather than Reactive Strategies
- Access to Equipment in Use in the Workplace
- Assistance in Purchasing Expensive Resources
- Fresh Viewpoints through Contact with Subject Matter Experts

Benefits for Industry/Corporate Sector

- Assistance in Training Design through Contact with Educators (Syllabus Construction vs. Instructional Design)
- Corporate Management is Given New Viewpoints
- Opportunity to Influence Curriculum to Meet Industry Needs
- "Gaps" in Education of Workers are Identified and Future Omissions Avoided
- Early Access to Talented Potential Employees

The current emphases upon *Quality* in Business and upon *Institutional Effectiveness* in Education are excellent bases for finding common ground. Competency-Based Education is based upon the premise that one must demonstrate mastery of one topic before moving on to another. Is this not another way of saying that one must be accountable for his performance and productive on the job before he is rewarded by a promotion or a raise?

Prior to the advent of high-tech equipment in most trades, vocational educators were held in low esteem by many "academics". Their students in their hard-hats and blue collars were seen as academically underprepared, although they were gifted with their hands.

This is no longer the case. One can not master a training manual, calculate a geometric tolerance or program a robot without more than just basic workplace math and literacy skills. ***Educators are the vendors for the American workplace.*** Just as American manufacturers expect quality parts from their vendors, they are entitled to expect quality workers from educational institutions.

WHAT IS A COMPETENCY-BASED PARTNERSHIP?

The Goal	The Method
Quality as the Measurement of Achievement	Student Focus in Education
Quality Maintained at Each Step	Effective Assessment and Evaluation
Quality Referred to Common Standard	Benchmarking by Standardized Testing
Quality Through Teamwork	Effective Communication between Instructor and Student
Quality as the Perceived Goal	Recognition of Achievement
Quality Continuously Improved	Information Sharing between Industry and Education
Quality Through Productivity	Retention and Innovation

Both academe and industry are customer-driven concerns. Too often the college/university fails to grasp the concept of the student as a customer or consumer. If schools are driven by concerns which are not centered on the student's needs, they will fail to thrive as institutions. Teachers who are involved in institutional decision-making and who receive adequate compensation for service will view their institution with the same loyalty and esteem as the empowered employee views his company in the private sector.

This process does not begin on the post-secondary level. Public schools in America have been easy targets for criticism. The horror stories abound, but quiet partnerships between local corporations and school systems do not attract equal emphasis. Could we not investigate local partnerships which begin prior to college or trade/school training and include them in our "pipeline"?

Many talented students who fall victim to the factors which qualify them for "at-risk" status could be salvaged before they fall through the cracks. Cooperative education programs and business partnerships could and should afford them opportunities for a natural progression from training and "real world job exposure" to employment throughout their adolescent and young adult years.

The leadership of each local school/business partnership must have a strong relationship with business/industry developers from local community colleges and universities. Joint endeavors could include career fairs, internships, and exchanges of personnel which enable classroom teachers to work in industry and plant personnel to work in the classroom.

Many companies are willing to grant release time for their employees to pursue activities such as Junior Achievement, tutoring, mentorships and lectures to select classes. This time is not a loss to the company, but an investment. If just one unmotivated, potential drop-out is spurred to continue in school and to upgrade his career and education plans, the payback to industry is in the quality of its

workforce. Service clubs and youth service organizations such as Junior Achievement should be strong links in this chain of cooperation.

Volunteerism on the part of the young person is also an important factor in forming partnerships. Quite often a troubled youth does not see the results of his actions and has not had an opportunity to bond with responsible adults. Stints served as volunteers at geriatric centers, food pantries, and hospitals often provide opportunities to see the impact of lost dreams and lost opportunities.

During the course of our research for this presentation, we made many interesting discoveries. We found that some common traits were found in each successful partnership that we examined. The type of partnership (e.g. Public/Private, School/Business, Business/Higher Education) was not as much a determinant of a successful alliance as the structure of the arrangement. Those which are listed as model programs are only the tip of the iceberg. For purposes of continuing such efforts and assistance in enhancing existing programs, we have drawn some conclusions.

Successful partnerships are like successful marriages. If proper care and nurturing are invested in these relationships, the payoff is long and rewarding and each partner grows and flourishes. Without special care and careful nurturing, the results may be an acrimonious split in which each partner feels aggrieved and betrayed. We want our participants to leave with formulas for exemplary and long term relationships.

CONCLUSION

(or How to Create a Marriage Made in Heaven and Prevent the Partnership from Hell)

SEARCH FOR PARTNER PHASE

1. Look at your professional affiliations. Are members of local chapters of ASTD, NSPI, NCRVE, NCTE (or any group to which you belong) interested in the Quality Movement in America?

2. Try to determine the Work Ethic and the level of team commitment of the organization. Are they rugged individuals or goal-directed team players?

3. Check with volunteers in local non-profit organizations. Are they interested in joint ventures?

4. Do some basic research at your school or public library.

COURTSHIP PHASE

1. Compare your QWL (Quality of Work Life) to your partner's. Are your goals compatible?

2. Do you share professional affiliations? If not, can you invite your partner to participate in workshops/seminars and meetings of your professional circle?

3. Compare each partner's visions for the future.

4. Get commitment from and stimulate excitement in each CEO represented in the partnership.

5. Identify funding sources and ascertain level of expertise in group for grantsmanship.

6. Create a joint vision statement.

EARLY STAGES OF MARRIAGE
(the Honeymoon Phase)

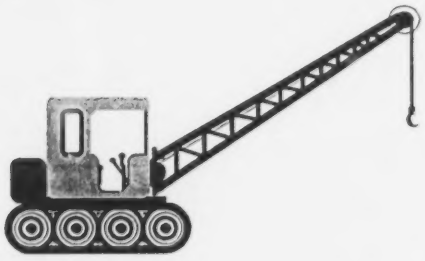
1. Consider channels of communication and develop a documentation procedure.
2. Sign a contract which spells out the expectations and obligations of each party.
3. Identify resources which can be shared rather than duplicated. (These should include intellectual as well as financial capital.)
4. Keep up the original level of enthusiasm for the task.
5. Give frequent and honest feedback to each other.

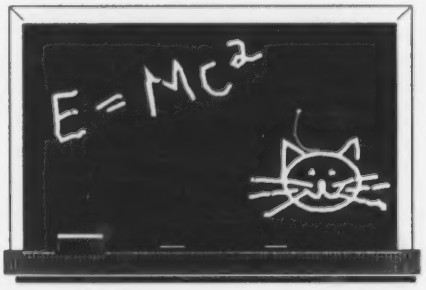
GOLDEN AND MATURE YEARS OF RELATIONSHIP

1. Publish stories about successful ventures. Share the benefits of experience with beginning coalitions.
2. Prepare reports which can be distributed to other organizations in the community.
3. Utilize the familiarity of long association to make constructive suggestions for change.
4. Never fail to show appreciation for the efforts of the partner.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT

- Discrepancy between Academic and Industry Compensation
- Tenure versus Performance-Based Evaluation
  (Accountability Issues)
- Negative Perceptions held by Each Domain about the Other





  (Ivory Tower vs. Hard Hat)

- Team Emphasis of Business/Industry Quality Movement versus the Individualized Emphasis of Education
- Turf Battles over Trivial Issues
  (Is Academe More or Less Political?)

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SOME SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

The following programs are only a microcosm of the many efforts and endeavors across the country. Names of contact persons have been listed, when possible.

Atlanta Partnership of Business and Education (APBE)
235 International Boulevard, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30301
(404)880-9000
Victoria Shanahan
Asst. Director

A joint venture of the Atlanta Public Schools and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

Business-Higher Education Forum
2021 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
Don Blandin
Executive Director

An initiative between the American Council of Education and a Board of Corporate Directors. Conducts forums twice yearly on issues which impact education and business. Publishes results of studies.

Center for Education and Training for Employment (CETE)
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090
(614) 292-4353
Dr. Robert Norton
Executive Director

Customized Training, research in vocational education, assistance to local industry.

Center for Quality Excellence
Southern College of Technology
1100 South Marietta Parkway
Marietta, Georgia 30060-2896
(404) 528-7407

Dean William Rezak
School of Technology

A new initiative between corporate Atlanta and Southern Tech to combine quality training at one facility.

Corporate Education Center
Boston University
72 Tyng Road
Tyngsboro, MA 01879

Philip Harkins, Executive Director

Customized Training Programs

Coalition for Educational Excellence
Greater Houston Partnership
1100 Milam, 25th Floor
Houston, TX 77002

Gordon Bonfield &
Felix Cook, Co-Directors

A new initiative between retired Tenneco executive and a retired Houston Independent School District Administrator. Well-funded by corporate Houston.

Engineering Council of Houston (ECH)
Technical Careers Committee
3121 Buffalo Speedway
Houston, Texas 77098

Dr. Thomas Hudson,
Chairman

Promotes careers in engineering profession through classroom appearances, involvement in science fairs, and other civic endeavors.

Maricopa Community College District
Corporate Services
3910 East Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85034
(602) 392-2490

Katherine May, Director

Employee Recruitment and Training; matching customized training to appropriate college within the district, assistance with grant preparation.

Train America's Workforce (TAW)
American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)
1630 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22313

A joint venture between the American Society of Training and Development and the Department of Labor to address the needs and concerns arising from reports such as "Workforce 2000".

REFERENCE LIST

For those of you who would like to take advantage of the current movements in quality and in educational partnerships, we would like to share some of the resources which were helpful in the preparation of this material.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

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Peters, Thomas J., and Robert H. Waterman, Jr. *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies.* New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1982

Peters, Tom *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution.* New York: Knoph, 1987.

"Training and Educating the Work Force in the Nineties: the Rationale for Public-Private Collaboration." Ohio State University: National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1988.

STANDARD REFERENCE BOOKS AND GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Dictionary of Occupational Titles.

Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Encyclopedias of Business.

Encyclopedias of Trade Associations.

U. S. Government Manual

Statistical Abstract of the United States.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

These are only a few. Learn about those which are active in your area.

American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)

American Management Association (AMA)

National League of Cities

Local Service Clubs (such as Rotary International and Kiwanis)

Local personnel associations

American Council on Education (ACE)

Local Teacher's and Trade Unions

National Association of Partners in Education (NAPE)

Any group of practicing professionals with an interest in cooperative endeavors.

PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Although we looked at many articles, trade journals and the publications favored by business were our best resource. A few of these publications included:

Business Week

Forbes

Fortune (Watch out for quarterly special issues. Many have dealt with issues affecting business and education.)

Harvard Business Review

Manufacturing Productivity Frontiers

Quality Periodicals (Nearly all pertaining to quality issues)

Training

Training and Development Journal

Wall Street Journal

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